

Webbs here face the two questions that, for ever, in differing forms, agitate the thinking and feeling mind of man questions that may be crudely stated as—Has every human being a soul, or only a few?—and—Has the universe a meaning? Is it a blind chaos, or an order expressive of some pattern none of us as yet completely sees, none of us perhaps can ever see? They affirm, on both souls are universal the universe is an order and not a chaos. They may, indeed in their writing they often do, overstate the orderliness of the order but the charmlessness of the presentation ought not to blind the reader to the fact that, for them, orderliness, while a good in itself, is also—and this is really more important—a means to a higher and wholly different kind of good. It may be that the freedom and fullness of life which they desire for others, as keenly as for themselves, leaves out certain elements but the passion that keeps them going is a desire to extend to all those things that they themselves see as good. This passion speaks clearly in the latter half of *The Constitution*.

If the defence of Democracy is here their most important contribution and vital purpose, the book also contains a luminous exposition of the other highly characteristic element in their thought as political Socialists—Gradualism. "We do not foresee any sudden or simultaneous termination of the Capitalist system." They are speaking here, of course, of Great Britain, where, historically,

"it took the Capitalist system several centuries to become the dominant form in industry. The process of transition

from profit-making industry to public service which has during the past quarter of a century made such great strides, and has been accelerated by the great war, will clearly continue for some time, and may at no one moment ever be completely accomplished."

Our race "does not take to catastrophic changes." Large sections of the British working class, and the whole of the